



MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

October 23, 2006

Chairman Kevin Martin
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Support BellSouth / AT&T Merger, WC Docket No. 06-74

Dear Commissioners:

The merger of AT&T and BellSouth will deliver new and innovative broadband technologies to improve Mississippi and our nation's educational capabilities. Therefore, I urge you to approve the merger promptly.

From distance learning to cutting-edge, in-classroom tools, our students and educators are already learning how technology can open new doors. Yet, we have barely begun to scratch the surface of the innovations in education that communications technology can make available to us. For this reason, the FCC should approve the merger of these two great American communications companies as quickly as possible.

We were pleased to learn recently that AT&T and BellSouth have proposed post-merger commitments, including a promise to bring *affordable* and *universal* broadband coverage to Mississippi parents and students. Specifically, AT&T and BellSouth have offered:

- A \$10 monthly residential broadband Internet service offering

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- A pledge to make available broadband Internet access to *all* residential living units in the AT&T/BellSouth footprint, including rural America and lower income housing units.

This broadband commitment will greatly benefit our educational system by:

- Speeding the deployment of exciting new broadband-based technologies and other promising innovations to our nation's schools and libraries and to students' homes.
- Providing new economic growth and jobs for our young people.
- Enhancing *distance learning* capabilities, such as offering students greater access to advanced placement and other classes, providing new educational tools for students and others with disabilities, and providing new cost-effective learning tools that will enhance America's global competitiveness.

Given the positive impact these commitments will bring to our educational system and young people, I urge you to approve the AT&T/BellSouth merger at the earliest possible date.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Sam Bounds, Ed.D.
Executive Director

cc: Marlene Dortch, Commission Secretary